

HOME COURSE IN MENTAL SCIENCE.

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LESSON SEVENTEEN.

A Noble Egoism the Foundation of Just Actions.



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A NOBLE EGOISM THE FOUNDATION OF JUST ACTION.

LESSON XVII.

Each individual "I" is forever the center of the universe. All things exist for the "I," even the Law; and without the "I" the Law would exist in vain.

Man and the Law are always reciprocal in interchange. The Law being sex, endures forever. It is the one unquenchable flame of divine passion. Man recognizes this passion, and by reason of recognition becomes its unquenchable reflection, or light, forever growing in brightness, in illuminating power, as he recognizes it more and more.

Man is one with this Law. Upon this point all these lessons hang. These lessons are the cudgel taken up in defense of the long abused race. They are the race's champion against its own accusations. Oh, I know what I am saying. The truth I am imparting to you with so much ease I have wrenched from death in a hand to hand struggle. Years and years I fought the charges hurled against poor, deluded humanity from pulpit and press, until by slow degrees I crawled from under the old

beliefs that had made this world so potent a hell to me, and stood in a fair, open space where, even though my conquests were unacknowledged by a single soul, I yet knew myself a conqueror. For my fealty to humanity I was called a traitor to "God," and I even believed that this was so, but now comes my day of justification in the knowledge that "God" and man are one.

A knowledge of one's own central self-existence—this is strength. Now strength is the first and most desirable attribute of the man, because every noble quality is strength's overplus. No man can be generous who is not first strong. No man can love nobly and worthily until he has acquired that measure of mental strength where he can stand alone in his individuality and give freely from a sense of perfect justice. All giving that is not from an overplus of strength is begging. The motives that prompt to this kind of giving are various. One person gives hoping for a greater return—it is a business investment. Another gives for the love of approbation. Another to satisfy the claims of his conscience. All give with a hidden motive except he whose giving is the overplus of strength. The giver may not realize this, but the very nature of the case makes it true. Weakness leans and begs perpetually.

Its every act holds in reserve the hope of gaining something more than it gives. But strength goes out. It overflows, and it can only overflow in good; pure unadulterated good. Being strength, it asks nothing in return for what it gives. It simply seeks to make others as strong as it is.

This is the point toward which humanity is now tending by a better recognition of itself individually. For nothing gives a man strength but the knowing his own power.

In order to be in much greater health and strength and beauty than we have ever realized, there is nothing necessary but a better knowledge of ourselves. You must have learned from the foregoing lesson that man is not a physical creature, and subject to what are called "the laws of causation," but that he is purely a mental statement, or a mental estimate of a certain amount of the one universal force, the Law of Being. Moreover he has made this statement, or this estimate himself, and has the power to correct its errors as fast as he finds them out. The errors in his statement show forth in weaknesses, diseases, etc., etc.

And now do you not see that man, being a mental statement, has made a fearful mistake in calling himself "a weak, feeble creature," "a

mere worm of the dust," and other expressions like these? For man to admit a belief in weakness is to be weak, because our beliefs are our external conditions. Therefore let every student of these lessons begin right here to deny the foolish old charges against himself which he has all his life been taught to believe would be pleasing to "God." Let him discard all feeling of humility, that attribute so lauded by the creeds, and learn to believe that the Law must be expressed in men, and not in things.

Humility is the most accursed of all the so-called virtues. It is born of sycophancy, and it blights every soul that assumes its hypocritical garb. Sycophancy is the child of fear, and until men are fearless they will never attain that freedom that means perfect health and strength. Humility has nothing to do with aspiration. Aspiration is the spirit's true means of growth; and aspiration is bold. It claims its own and gets it, unless self-imposed humility, like some slimy creature, clings to it and pulls it down.

Humility is an insult to the source of a man's being; or it would be if its true character was understood by those who assume it. But men know so little of the power they call God, they imagine they please it and magnify it by belittling themselves.

No man can magnify this power; but he can debase himself by crawling in the dust and denying his own power.

Now this denial of power in man is infidelity, and the only infidelity I know of.

The reason that each individual "I" seems to himself the center of all things is because of the omnipresence of the Law. There being no circumference, each "I" is the spoken word of a boundless eternity, and its own emphasis creates it the center from its own point of view. The spiritual interpretation of each individual I is centralization. Therefore the soul that proclaims the I proclaims itself centralized. The soul that denies the I denies its centralization, and thus indirectly affirms its weak and scattered condition. Let the student discard at once and forever the soul-crushing humility he has been taught to cultivate as a priceless virtue, and begin to extol himself. Let him not extol himself in the spirit of vanity, based on a groundless and ignorant assumption of his own superiority to other people; but let him, after perceiving the great truth of his being and realizing his oneness with the Law, begin at once to declare his own manhood; not in the spirit of boasting, but in the understanding of truth.

In this declaration, if made understandingly, a grand sense of justice will take possession of him. He will perceive immediately that what he declares for himself he cannot help declaring for his neighbors, and even for his worst enemy. This declaration of a man's own individual, high, pure ideal of manhood is the one unerring peacemaker. It is the beginning of that harmony which means heaven on earth. And it is so because, in the fact of a man's learning his own worth, lies the assurance of his power to recognize the worth of other men—of all men—and this is the first step toward the reign of justice upon the earth, and the beginning of that harmony that means heaven.

Just in proportion as we become self-centered by a recognition of the great importance of the "I" we come under the Law of Attraction where our own comes to us. What is our own? Everything that we desire. But note this: We often think we desire things that we do not truly desire. What we do truly desire is happiness. Happiness is our ultimate desire, and it is the craving of the spirit. It is the seeking of the spirit for a better recognition of itself. Suppose we desire that some one may die who stands between us and an inheritance? This intermediate desire has nothing to do with the spirit. The spirit simply desires

happiness; it does not suggest methods for attaining happiness; the suggestion comes from the personality and not from the real individuality. The real individuality is so much force, or Love, pushing always in the direction of greater expression, and always aggregating to itself greater power.

Understanding at last that desire is the spirit, it is plain to see that it is of greater importance than we ever imagined. Therefore instead of attempting to crush it out of our organizations, where it is really the breath of our lives, we must learn to direct it properly.

Now this individual center in the lower animals, and indeed all through man's period of unconscious growth, manifests itself in pure selfishness; a selfishness so ingrained and deep that it utterly ignores all rights except its own. But in the growth from animal to human, selfishness becomes selfhood. Selfhood is still selfishness, but with such bonds imposed upon it by the growing intelligence as will guard the rights of others against encroachments. An infusion of the sense of justice in the growing race has so modified the individual centerhood of selfishness that it has become a glorious thing—namely, a strong power to hold for self, based on ideas of universal justice.

Now I wish to emphasize this point of holding for self. I wish to do so because the race has been filled full of nonsense on the subject of self-abnegation.

Self-abnegation, or self-denial, is the most paralyzing and deadly mistake that ever was made. It is letting go your hold on life, abandoning all you have gained in your previous growth through the ages, and drifting backward, as nearly as one can do so, into nothingness. And every bit of undue or unconsidered concession to the opinions of others partakes of the nature of self-abnegation, and should be promptly stopped. Ask yourself if you have not as much right to your selfhood as another man has, and when you answer this question affirmatively, as you cannot help doing, then stand for yourself boldly and manfully.

It may seem at first thought that men do, even now, hold for themselves with great firmness. But this is not so. Indeed the very opposite is so marked among the people that Emerson speaks of society as a "mush of concession."

There is so little of true self-holding in the world that where one does meet a truly individualized man or woman it is an event never to be forgotten.

Under these circumstances the opinion of the world is worthless. The majority of the people have no opinions of their own, but accept those that are thrust upon them. In this way we are saddled with the beliefs of men ages dead, whose opportunity of knowing truth was a thousand times inferior to our own. Is it any wonder that such utterly negative creatures should die? Why, they ought to die. Life and its tremendous mission, involving such thought and such effort as they never imagined, is not for them. The grappling hook of infinite purpose passes through them like so much jelly; they yield not the smallest shred in response to it. It is all self-abnegation with them, though of an unconscious character.

Unconscious self-abnegation, or the lack of intelligent self-assertion, is the bane of humanity at this time.

The belief in self-abnegation comes from the awakening intelligence that in looking back sees only the horrors of animal selfishness, and does not look forward to where this same selfishness is modified by justice, and through this modification can become the very essence of true manhood and womanhood.

The child is not polite. It grabs its toys and holds them firmly

away from the little friend who has come to visit it. Later on it will value the pleasure of its little friend more than it values the toys, and then it will yield them up gladly. Nor will this giving be in the spirit of self-abnegation; it will be because the giving yields more happiness to self than the withholding. Self is forever at the bottom of all things, as it should be, for self is always the individual center; and the change from selfishness to selfhood—which is still selfishness lifted to a higher plane—will come through a growing infusion of the Love Principle in the race; an infusion that makes the happiness of others our own dearest happiness.

Of course all of this comes under the head of evolution, and there is no logical interpretation of humanity except by the evolutionary theory. But even the most timid sticklers for biblical authority need not be afraid of it. Darwin never taught the evolutionary theory half so strongly as the Bible teaches it.

I have now shown how the selfishness of the animal has changed to selfhood in the man by the constantly increasing influx of love into the race; love for self that overflows in love for others. Now this love has come from a better recognition of the power of the Law, and will keep

on increasing as this recognition keeps on growing. All this growth by the recognition of the power of the Law is tending in the direction of universal brotherhood, which means a state of the sweetest harmony among the people; a condition of high and mighty and loving restfulness, in which the seeds of new faculties now lying dormant in the human brain will take root and grow up into undreamed-of potencies.

As all our past unconscious growing has been from the basis of self, so will our future growing be from the same basis, for there is no other true basis of growth.

The recognition of self which shows forth in such fearful selfishness in the animal is, in point of fact, the recognition of the Law. This may seem to be a strange statement, but I shall prove its truth. The Law and Being mean the same thing. The animal's recognition of the Law, or Being, is in proportion to its intelligence. As much as it recognizes is its own, its very self; and it guards this self and ministers to this self by the best knowledge it has. But this knowledge constantly grows and expands, and gradually the things that once ministered most to self, or selfishness, cease; a wider range of vision introduces the sense of justice, which is the beginning of that true harmony

that is the goal of every human aspiration, and which alone means freedom.

And—observe this point closely—harmony, universal justice, is not achieved by individual concession or self-abnegation, but by the assertion of self under the influence of the ever-growing idea that he who asserts self asserts the Law—which is absolute harmony—in humanity. To deny self is to deny the harmonious action of the Law in humanity, and thus to undo, so far as such a thing is possible, the work of organization; that work which men call “the creation.”

Therefore I say, stand by self, for in so doing you are standing for the Law. You are standing for just as much of the harmony of the Law as you can recognize, and by holding firm in this position you will soon recognize more and still more until the harmony of the Law in you will overflow in one great, broad, strong stream of love that will embrace every living soul. And this will be your true self flowing forth; the same self that flowed forth in the animal in getting the most good, will, by reason of your increased intelligence, now flow forth in you in doing the most good.

And thus the competitive systems of business, which are all animal

in their origin, and which all aim at getting the most good, are even now in process of becoming emulative systems, wherein each will try to excel the other in doing the most good.

Competition is right on its own plane. It is the unchecked development of individuality; and individuality is the one jewel above all price. When competition has ripened into emulation heaven will be here, and that too without one particle of concession from any soul.

Concession, self-denial, self-abnegation, is ruinous. It is the denial of our own individuality. It is the most direct road to nothingness. It is the resignation of that which alone makes the man, or gives him, as a factor of any worth, to the world. An ignorant man standing firmly on his selfhood, uneducated as yet in a true sense of justice, may be an exceedingly disagreeable member of a community. But his very position denotes strength, and there is hope of his learning. But the man who has entirely slopped down from the claims of self, who has resigned his individuality, what is he? A mere vagabond; listless, hopeless; a drifting scum, waiting removal from human sight.

I have made the foregoing points with a purpose, and a strong purpose, too. The student who is afraid to stand for himself and to declare

himself will never be healthy or strong in any respect. The patients whom I literally cannot cure are those who will not hold for self. When a patient says to me, "I want to get well if it is God's will," I see his position instantly. He is off his perpendicular, and lopping clear over to one side, or "wobbling" around in every direction like a wilted flower-stalk. He has not the centralizing force of the straight and stiff and uncompromising "I" to hold him in position. No wonder he is sick!

It may be thought that it is not safe to trust man with a will of his own; but I must say to the student that the most dangerous men I have known are those who believe they are filled with "God's" will, and begin to execute it upon their neighbors. Freeman thought he was filled with God's will and was executing God's will when he murdered his child. If ever a man acted from a conscientious belief he did. Guiteau believed he was the agent of God's will when he murdered Garfield. The witches were burned because the people were filled with God's will. The very bloodiest events of history in all the world have been prompted by what was called God's will. God's will has served as the excuse for far more injustice and crime than all other causes put together. Does the student

imagine that the man's will is going to be half so murderous a thing as this imaginary God's will? The truth is, "God's will" has simply been a safety-valve for the expression of race cruelty during its period of evolution from animal to human. Humanhood means manhood; and the race is reaching it by the development of man's individual will. The more man trusts his own will and the less he trusts this imaginary God's will, the more will his acts rest upon his own individuality, and the more will he gauge them by his own unfolding sense of justice. In short, the more a man trusts himself the more manly and noble and pure and just and self-poised will he become.

Looking within, you may perceive the self there, and you may conclude that it is a very selfish thing—a thing to be thrown overboard—while on your bended knees you beg for a nobler self. Now this nobler self you are begging for is the very self you are misjudging; and there is nothing the matter with you except that your dull intelligence fails to recognize this beautiful breath of Life which is individualized within you.

These lessons on Mental Science, as I said before, have to do with the growth of the man, and not with the conditions he shall inaugurate

afterward. The man once builded in a knowledge of himself and of the God within him, conditions then build themselves about him. They become the expression of his individual will, or desire. After we have builded ourselves into great power by the recognition of our own wills, we will seem to have almost nothing to do with building our surrounding conditions, because it will be so easy. They will almost seem to drift to us, or to group themselves about us in obedience to the Law of Attraction in proportion as the strength of the Law becomes organized in us. Every added belief in the reality of the good and in the unreality of evil brings us more fully in the line of the Law's operation, and makes it easier for us to get what we want and to be able to do what we please. Everything that is related to our peculiar faculty, whether near or far, will come to us. It will offer itself to our faculties of creativeness, to be worked into things of use and beauty to serve our needs. It will then be as Emerson says:

“Whate'er in nature is thine own,
Floating in air or pent in stone,
Will rive the hills and swim the sea,
And like thy shadow follow thee.”

In man's operations from the central point or basis of self, he is entitled to what he wants. He need not beg for what he wants. It is his own by divine right, and unless he takes it as his own he will never build his life up in the strength of true manhood. All through the period of his unconscious growth he took; he did not beg. He did this regardless of his fellows. What he took represented to him his highest ideal of happiness. Now his ideal is enlarged. It is so greatly enlarged that it lifts him quite out of the (so-called) physical realm into the intellectual one, and what he now demands as essential to his happiness is health, strength, beauty and opulence. And of these he may demand what he will and no one be robbed, for he is now in the high place where the supply is equal to the demand, and where he is coming more and more under the Law of Attraction where his own comes to him because it is related to his desires.

Therefore you need not beg. A true analysis of things past and present will show us that there never was a beggar on earth until man came, and that beggars were never needed, or meant to have a place in existence.

To get the things a man needs in the present transitional age from

animal to human, he is forced to become as aggressive as any warrior. For everything he attempts to take out of the mental world—the world of unorganized good—is denied him and its every existence disputed by a thousand race beliefs that rise up before him and threaten him with destruction.

This fight for mastery being at this time entirely in the realm of the intellect, we must begin it, not by begging our own, but by claiming it. Discard every thought of humility. Make a statement of what you want and claim it as your due. And, take this one fact into consideration, that man, as to his personality, or visible existence, has no "God-given" place, and no natural sphere, save that which he has wrested from the universe by his own intelligent demand. Man, as to his personality, is man-made and not "God-made."

Individuality is of such tremendous importance that we are not trying to lose it in the subjective side of Being; we are trying to bring it forth and establish it in these personalities. And here is the difference between Christian and Mental Science. Mental Science believes in the present, and the personal, and the visible, and the audible. It believes in the evolution of Law into the personal and the present, through the

intelligent recognition of men and women. And it is in this way we will banish disease and death and establish heaven on earth. For the more good, or Law, a man recognizes in himself the stronger and more positive he is. And thus will disease and death be overcome, since they are merely the negations, or denials, of a man's power to conquer. They are nothing in themselves, and have no power except the power men confer upon them by believing in them. And as men believe in self more, and recognize the godhood of self, they will disbelieve the fancied power of disease and death, and these phantoms will disappear from human perception.

Then stand by your desires, and claim their fulfillment. They are the inalienable promise of universal *Being* in you, whose unfulfillment most prove the Law a liar.

But first, search your desires and prove their noble nature. The desire, which is the voice of the Law in you, does not include any method your personality may suggest as being the right way to attain the desire. The desire is the spirit, and it asks for happiness and nothing else. It will be your personal mistake if you seek happiness by methods that wrong others, and not the mistake of the spirit. Therefore, as we

are still so ignorant, the proper thing is to ask for happiness simply, or rather to claim happiness as our own right. Of course every idea of happiness includes those other ideas of health, strength, beauty and opulence; and it is these four things that make up the real man. After the man is made by the establishment of such glorious health, strength and beauty as makes every moment of his life a joy to him, he will turn his thoughts outward toward the building of new and better conditions for his fellows. For man is the builder, and when he has builded himself, he will build externally in a wonderful way. Yes, in a thousand wonderful ways. For man's sphere is here on earth and he will build outward from the earth until the interstellar space between the planets shall show forth the wonders of his inventions and discoveries.

In conclusion, then, I say once more, stand by self. Self is not a sinful or a dreadful thing. It is the glorious basis of everything that is visible in the universe. In each individual thing, whether crystal, tree animal or man, it is the wresting from negation the more positive expression that confers the mastery. Therefore let no student be horrified because I have rescued self from the mistakes that have overlain it so long. I said in a former lesson that the truth-seeker is the image-

breaker, and that no one need be grieved to see his pet hobbies fall before him. It is time they all fell. It is time for us to turn our backs on the past and accept the instruction given in Lot's wife—never to look behind us. For I tell you now the dreadful old charnel-houses where we have been entombed alive for such a long time are falling, and we must escape from them forthwith.

And now I wish the student to investigate "self," and when by repeated reading of this lesson he sees that it is the Law of Life individualized in him, I want him to stand up for it and to hold it most sacredly above the old-time beliefs that have made a devil out of it and prepared a hell for its future reception. Stand by self; magnify it; but indeed no one can magnify it, for no one's conception of it can do it justice. But you can magnify your ideas of it, and thus conquer the race beliefs concerning it.

And this is the battle you will have to fight. The battle is between the new truth that Mental Science brings and the old crucifying beliefs, born of an age of rankest ignorance, that have so long held the people in darkness concerning their own strength and worth. And you cannot stand too strongly for the right. Make your own statement of your

goodness and power, and reiterate it in the face of every old-world belief as rapidly as they shall confront you. Say "I am here for myself, to build myself up in health, strength and beauty by claiming my own. Nothing is too good for me. I claim the best, and I expect to get it, too."

As I said once before, there never was a beggar on earth until the advent of man; and looking over the past history of man it really does seem as if "God" (by which I mean the universal spirit of Life) was absolutely resolved to put us on our own independence by refusing our requests. And indeed this universal Spirit of Life is indifferent to us, and it speaks to us through its indifference, saying, "Oh, men, I exist for your taking; take me or let me alone. Learn by my silence that you are my spokesmen, and I the infinite reservoir from which you draw as you need; and behold, the supply is always equal to your demand."

Man is thus thrown entirely upon himself. During the period of his unconscious growth he does draw upon the limitless reservoir as he needs, and does his own growing. His unformed brain has yielded no thought of his own unworthiness, and he takes what he desires and expresses it in use.

Now this limitless reservoir is as free to us to-day as at any past period of our growth; and when we fully know this we shall re-establish our growth at the point where unconscious growth dropped us. But in coming into this position we must gradually learn that we are perfectly independent beings; that no God holds us accountable for past or present sins; that there are no sins and never have been; that what the world calls sins are merely the mistakes our ever-growing intelligence have made in coming up to our present standing place. Being thus exculpated from the accusations of conscience, we begin to see ourselves as we are.

And what are we? Why, we are wonderful creatures! Only think how we have forged our way up from such small beginnings, and where we stand now! Think what conquerors we are! How we have burst first one bond of ignorance and then another; and how lobe after lobe has put forth in our ever-unfolding brains like buds on flower-stalks; and how, as each one put forth, it held in latency the germ of another yet to appear; and how it is evident there will never be any cessation to the unfoldment of these fresh buds of unimagined power within our own heads. Why, do not you see that man is a scroll unfolding outwardly continually? And it is because he only unfolds outwardly that his habit of looking backward stultifies him so awfully.



